

We welcome the fact that you are pleased with the amendments in the law that we have been proposing for 2 years, and which you and OEO resisted. Certainly the last thing we want to do at this stage, now that we have accomplished finally what we wanted, giving you full authority to administer this program as we think should happen in a number of other programs, is to move backward and take that authority away from you. If it is a problem of language it will be straightened out and we will be glad to include the changes we made in the law last year.

Chairman PERKINS. Mr. Boutin, before you make any further comment, I want to point out that you have just pointed up one of the great weaknesses in H.R. 10682, commonly referred to as an "Opportunity Crusade."

Now you are an administrator with considerable experience in the operation of our Government. You have firsthand knowledge of the operation of the Economic Opportunity Act at the present time.

What is your evaluation of the Office of Economic Opportunity as presently constituted in the administration of the poverty program such as we have set forth in H.R. 8311 in comparison with H.R. 10682, the so-called Opportunity Crusade?

Mr. BOUTIN. Mr. Chairman, before I answer that question I would just like to make sure the record is straight, that I did not personally ever oppose the amendments to the OEO of last October, October 1966.

Chairman PERKINS. That is my recollection.

Mr. BOUTIN. OEO may have but I personally did not, either as Administrator of SBA or individually. As far as the provisions of H.R. 8311, I think, this is good legislation. I said earlier that I most certainly endorse it, not only as a member of the Administration but because I think it is right. I think some necessary changes are being made—I have long felt that we need it—to bring the municipal government and State government into the program a lot more than we have in the past. This provides for that.

I think a number of other refinements—and I am not totally familiar with all the provisions of the bill but I have read it—are going to meet the needs of the times and therefore I am in favor of it.

Chairman PERKINS. Isn't it your idea that the present poverty program under the Office of Economic Opportunity is getting off the ground and commencing to reach the people that we are striving to reach, the poor?

Mr. BOUTIN. I don't think there is any question about that, Mr. Chairman. One of the most glowing statements about the war on poverty that I have heard recently by certainly a very objective and very learned man, I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon given for the purpose of introducing the chairman of the board of the General Electric Co., and he spoke of their experience in Job Corps as an example and what it is doing and what an eye opener it had been for him and his colleagues in General Electric, certainly a great and very large company.

I think the program definitely has done an immense amount of good. It has a long way to go and it is going to take the patience of the Congress and the public to get there.

Chairman PERKINS. I agree with you it has done a tremendous amount of good. Would it be a mistake in your judgment, to throw